FIG. 3 is a flowchart depicting functionality of a representative embodiment of the location-specific input system of FIG. 2.

FIG. 4 is a flowchart depicting functionality of another representative embodiment of the location-specific input system of FIG. 2.

FIG. 5 is a schematic diagram depicting a computer or processor-based device that may be utilized to implement the location-specific services system of FIG. 1.

FIG. 6 is a flowchart depicting functionality of a representative embodiment of the location-specific services system of FIG. 5.

FIG. 7 is a flowchart depicting functionality of another representative embodiment of the location-specific services system of FIG. 5.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Referring now to the figures, wherein like reference numerals indicate corresponding components throughout the several views, FIG. 1 depicts a representative embodiment of an information system 10 of the present invention. As shown in FIG. 1, information system 10 can include a location-specific services system 100 ("services system") and a location-specific input system 110 ("input system"). As described in greater detail hereinafter, the services system and input system interact so that a user can be provided with information. Preferably, such information is based, at least partially, on the location of the user. As should become apparent, this functionality can enhance the convenience of using portable computing devices, *e.g.*, an Internet-capable cell phone.

Services system 100 of FIG. 1 is adapted to provide information to a user. In some embodiments, the information provided by the services system is specifically selected based on the user's location. In these embodiments, a user accessing the

services system, such as via a portable computing device, may not need to enter location information into their portable computing device in order to receive information, which corresponds to the user's location, from the services system. Preferably, as described herein, the input system automatically provides information corresponding to the user's location to the services system. This potentially alleviates the need for the user to enter location information or browse for information corresponding to the user's location when communicating with the services system.

The ability of a user to receive location-specific information via a portable computing device without having to input location information manually can significantly enhance the efficiency and/or convenience of using portable computing devices. As is known, such portable computing devices typically provide relatively small display screens for viewing information and/or relatively few actuators for performing various functions, such as entering information. Thus, when a user desires information relevant to a particular location, *e.g.*, the user's current location, it is oftentimes difficult and/or tedious for the user to enter the location information into the portable computing device.

By way of example, if a user desires to purchase movie tickets for a particular movie and the user is unsure as to which theater(s) is showing the movie, the user could browse information provided by a movie ticket purchasing service via a portable computing device. In order to identify an appropriate theater, the user typically would provide the movie ticket purchasing service with a location, *e.g.*, the city, corresponding to the desired theater location via the portable computing device. Due to the limited display screen space of such a device, the user may be required to scroll through various menus and/or manually enter the location via a keypad, for example, in order to provide the location information to the services system.

By using an embodiment of the services system associated with a movie ticket purchasing service, a user desiring movie tickets may only need to enter information corresponding to the desired movie. More specifically, the location of the user could be provided automatically to the services system, such as via an input system associated with the user's portable computing device. The services system could be adapted to receive the information corresponding to the location of the user and use this information for determining which theater would be suitable, *e.g.*, the closest theater to the user.

As shown in FIG. 1, various types of portable computing devices can be used to implement input system 110. For instance, portable computing devices, such as personal digital assistant (PDA) 112, phone 114, and laptop 116, can use the input system. Typically, the device employing the input system facilitates communication between the input system and the services system. More specifically, communication of the input system with the services system can be accomplished via a communication network 120, *i.e.*, a network that the portable computing device is configured to utilize. In this regard, network 120 may be any type of communication network employing any network topology, transmission medium, or network protocol. For example, network 120 may be any public or private packet-switched or other data network, including the Internet, circuit-switched networks, such as the public switched telephone network (PSTN), wireless network, or any other desired communications infrastructure and/or combination of infrastructures.

Preferably, the input system communicates with a locating device 122. The locating device is configured to facilitate determining the position of the portable computing device with which it is associated. For example, in some embodiments, a Global Positioning System (GPS) receiver can be associated with the portable